

April 30, 2010

Washington, DC – On Wednesday, Rep. Ben Ray Luján voted to strengthen American's competitiveness and move our economy forward, meeting the needs of the 21st century. In a House Committee on Science and Technology markup hearing, Rep. Luján joined his colleagues to pass the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act, which will update and improve similar legislation that was passed in 2007. The bill will strengthen U.S. scientific and economic leadership, support employers, and create jobs. The legislation passed out of the Committee on Science and Technology by a bipartisan vote of 29 to 8, and it will now move to the House floor for a final vote.

“As we look to get our country back on track, it is critically important to make sure that America can remain globally competitive in science, math and research,” said Rep. Luján. “The COMPETES Reauthorization Act, improves science, technology, engineering, and math education – ensuring that we will have a new generation of scientists, researchers and innovators that can tackle the challenges facing our country and our world. It also encourages innovation and supports critical research that can lead to new breakthroughs that will drive our economy in the future.”

The legislation makes critical investments in the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology labs, empowering our researchers and scientists to make new discoveries.

The Committee accepted several amendments from Rep. Luján, including a critical amendment that will make funds available to pay for the federal portion of Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs) at DOE national laboratories. CRADAs are a mechanism by which a basic science technology that has been developed at a national laboratory can be matured in cooperation with a non-federal partner. However, every year across the many DOE national laboratories, there are many potential cooperative work arrangements that go unrealized because the non-federal partner, often a small business, can't afford to pay for both the federal portion as well as its own portion of the work. Rep. Luján's amendment will enhance the cooperative agreements between DOE national labs and small businesses and in doing so will help spur innovation, support small businesses and create jobs.

Rep. Luján worked with Chairman Bart Gordon to include support for Hispanic-Serving Institutions programs as well as an amendment to establish into law the Tribal Colleges and Universities Program at the National Science Foundation. This program awards grants to tribal colleges and universities to enhance the quality of undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education, and to increase the retention and graduation rates of Native American students pursuing degrees in STEM fields.

Rep. Luján also included an amendment that will double funding for technology transfer programs at the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) – a DOE agency that brings together a diverse community of energy researchers from the nation's national laboratories, universities, investor and commercial communities to develop cutting-edge technologies to help solve our energy problems. This amendment empowers businesses to grow the technology developed in our national laboratories and universities for commercial application.

Over 140 organizations have endorsed the legislation including: the Association of American Universities, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the Biotechnology Industry

Organization, the Business Roundtable, the Council on Competitiveness, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Venture Capital Association, TechAmerica, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

For more information the S&T Committee's work on [COMPETES](#) , please visit the Committee's [website](#)